

contradictory to the state policy that we have been working towards for the last five or six years since I have been in the Legislature. We have in five or six different areas raised the mandatory retirement age to 70 or higher. We have done that because we have understood that it is necessary to try to encourage people to work longer. We have recognized that health care and other factors have significantly increased the life span of Americans, that Americans are healthy and capable of working longer and so we have raised the mandatory ages. Now in contradiction to that we seem to be about to adopt a state policy that encourages earlier retirement. I suggest to you that we should have one philosophy or the other and that the correct philosophy is to encourage elderly people to work longer, not shorter. In conjunction with that particular statement, I would point out to you that the reason that we have encouraged them to work longer or one of the important reasons is the change in demographics in the United States. More and more or larger and larger percentage of our population is elderly and will continue to be elderly which will put an increasing burden on the fewer that are left to work. It will put increasing pressure on the productive elements of our society. I suggest to you that we can not afford, at this juncture in our history, to exacerbate that problem, because it is going to be an ever larger and almost overwhelming problem for the rest of this particular decade and probably for the rest of this century. So for that philosophic reason, I suggest to you that lowering the retirement age is simply not a good idea. I would also remind you that in these times we are in ever stiffening competition with countries around the world and that competition stiffens because of relative productivity factors. If we continue to encourage a larger percentage of our population to be nonproductive, then we can only expect that our competitive position is going to worsen. So for that reason in addition, I suggest to you that early retirement ages and the pressure that comes from increased government expenditures to fund those early retirement ages and the consequential lessening of the amount of funds that is in the private sector, it all fits together, is all related, makes this bill, again, not a good idea in its early retirement aspect. So, with that, Mr. Speaker, and